

First of a Series on
SPICES

SPICES--INTRODUCTION

by

MARIE SVOBODA

Raymond Foundation



Museum Stories, Number 270

October 2, 1954

Spices

The search for spices is a vigorous and thrilling story of exotic Eastern islands and swashbuckling buccaneers. It is impossible in our day and age to realize just how precious spices once were.

The story of foods contains no chapter more romantic than that on spices. Spices were sought just as eagerly as gold. They were important in the establishment of early trade-routes and in the exchange of goods between the East and the West because, along with silks and perfumes, they were the principal articles of trade.

Aleppo, in Syria, was at first the great distributing center of spices. They were brought there overland in great caravans across China and India, up the Persian Gulf by sailing vessels, and by camel again across the desert. From Aleppo spices were sold to merchants who peddled them up and down the Mediterranean. Arab merchants secretly obtained spices direct from the Orient, and, in the ninth century after Christ, these Arabs brought spices for the first time to European market-places.

To a people who, for the most part, knew only their own villages, these new flavors came from a strange half-mythical country called Araby. Of course the Arabian merchants did everything they could to make their country an even more mysterious place. They told terrible stories of monsters in the sea and men-like demons on land who guarded the trees so that none but the bravest of adventurers could get the spices. Naturally, these stories were used to boost the price of spices still higher, but the higher the price went, the greater became the demand for spices.

Spices were really a necessity then. Food oftentimes was almost unfit to eat because of spoilage, and so some strong hot flavor was needed to disguise the bad taste. Pepper, cloves, and cinnamon were, therefore, blessings to princes and peasants alike. The rich would pay any price for them; the poor would do without necessities to make a show of using spices. It was because of the search for a direct route to the East and its spices that America was

discovered. Perhaps if modern refrigeration had been known in the days of Columbus, spices would not have been so important as they were and perhaps the New World might not have been discovered until centuries later.

With the growth of the spice trade every great nation tried to gain complete power over the sale of spices, and the struggle among nations for the control of the spice trade was often violent and bloody. The Portuguese had opened the way, but it was the Dutch who smashed barriers, hurdled obstacles, and brought to its highest peak the highly competitive East Indies trade.

Spices even played a part in the growth of the United States. At the close of America's war with England, the American Merchant Marine came into existence. The fast-sailing clipper ships of the rash Americans went swifter and more surely than the more cumbersome Dutch and English vessels. It was not long before the American ships were watched carefully. But because India and the Indies were full of Dutch, English, French, and Portuguese traders, the Americans wisely stayed away from trouble and, instead, opened the China trade with Canton. Massachusetts ship-owners became rich from the profits and built the white houses that still stand in Salem and Boston.

Spices—those bits of concentrated flavor—brought about tremendous changes in the world. The huge profits gained in the spice trade stirred mariners to explore new oceans and lands, helped to build great churches and palaces, and brought about the growth of cities and nations.



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Second of a Series on

SPICES

PEPPER

by

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Museum Stories, Number 271

October 9, 1954

Pepper

Trade in pepper is one of the oldest in the world, and pepper is still the most valuable spice to be had. Pepper was one of the first spices known to man. It was included among the treasures of spices and rare gums of the kings of Egypt more than two thousand years before Christ.

Pepper was among the chief articles of trade between Europe and India from the very beginning of commerce in spice. Pepper was so expensive that it often replaced money in business transactions. Even tribute was sometimes collected in pepper. When Alaric the Goth conquered Rome in about A.D. 408, the ransom that he demanded included three thousand pounds of pepper.

Pepper was an important commodity in Greece and Rome, and it was the chief spice of the Middle Ages. As early as A.D. 1180 the Guild of Pepperers was one of the leading trade guilds in England. It is an interesting fact that London is still the center of the pepper trade.

Pepper was mentioned by Theophrastus in the fourth century before Christ. Marco Polo tells about the production of pepper in Java in 1280. During the Middle Ages pepper was a valued spice, and Venice, Genoa, and other European cities owed much of their wealth to its importation.

The demand for this spice and its costliness were the main reasons that the Portuguese sought a sea passage to India. The Venetians and Genoese controlled the sale of pepper almost completely, but when the Portuguese found the sea route in the late fifteenth century the price of pepper fell and, in spite of the efforts of the Venetians to hold the lead, control passed from them to the Portuguese, who held it until the seventeenth century.

Pepper, the berry of a plant native to southern India, is now grown chiefly in that country and in the Malayan and Cambodian regions. Except for vanilla, pepper is the only spice that grows on a climbing vine. Pepper plants, when cultivated, climb eight to twenty feet high on trees or stakes and are known to bear fruit for twenty years. The pepper plant requires a hot humid climate and at least

partial shade to grow well. It has leathery evergreen leaves and very small flowers that grow in elongated clusters. At one time it was believed that white pepper and black pepper come from different plants, but they come from the same plant. White pepper is merely black pepper without the outer coats of skin and pulp of the pepper berries.

For preparation of the black pepper of commerce, the spikes or clusters of fruits are gathered when at least a few of the berries in each spike are red or almost ripe. The spikes are picked by hand and dried in the sun. Sometimes they are treated with boiling water before they are allowed to dry. When they are dry, the berries, or peppercorns, as they are called, are rubbed off their stems, sifted, and packed for shipment to factories where they are ground to a fine powder.

White pepper is prepared from berries that are ripe. They are picked and piled in heaps to ferment or are soaked in water. Only the seeds are used for white pepper. The berries are placed in tubs where they are stamped underfoot until the stems, skins, and pulp are separated from the seeds. Then the seeds are dried and later ground. Often white pepper is made from dried peppercorns by grinding off the outer parts with special machinery.

Black pepper is more pungent than white pepper and is preferred by most people. The stronger black pepper is used commonly as a kitchen spice and is the principal spice that is added to meats and sausages.

Pepper is now cultivated everywhere in the Eastern tropics. Pepper plants are found from Africa to India, Siam, the Philippines, the East Indies, and the South Sea Islands. The consumption of pepper is enormous.



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Third of a Series on
SPICES

NUTMEGS AND MACE

by

MARIE SVOBODA

Raymond Foundation



Museum Stories, Number 272

October 16, 1954

Nutmegs and Mace

"Cut down half the nutmeg trees and plant more mace!" roared the old spice-merchants of Amsterdam when they were told that people wanted mace more than they wanted nutmegs. How could the merchants in far-off Holland know that mace and nutmegs grow on one and the same tree!

Both spices come from a large handsome evergreen tree that is native to the Moluccas or Spice Islands. When European traders first saw the fruits, they were reminded of the apricots that they knew back home. The fruits, although slightly larger than apricots, are golden yellow but, unlike apricots, they are not good to eat. The meat is dry and leathery. When the fruit ripens, it splits and exposes a large stone or pit covered with a lacework of bright crimson threads. The stone is the nutmeg, and the crimson threads are the mace.

Nutmegs and mace reached European markets by 1200, and for a while after the Spice Islands were discovered in 1512 the Portuguese traders had an almost complete control over the sale of both spices. Later the Dutch took the control away from the Portuguese. Still later some of the nutmeg trees were smuggled into French and British



possessions, so that never again did any one country have absolute control over these spices. But the Dutch, hoping that no nutmegs would ever escape their control, destroyed the nutmeg trees on all the islands except Amboina. On this island nutmegs were guarded as carefully as precious gems. And to prevent them from growing anywhere else, all nutmegs to be sold were kept in a lime bath for three months. Therefore all of them had a white coating of lime. Today, even though there is no monopoly, nutmegs are still whitened with limewater, and probably they will always appear on the market in that way.

Mace, the stringy covering of the nutmeg, is at first crimson but changes to yellowish brown as it dries. It is usually removed by hand when the nutmegs are harvested. Mace is always in demand and usually costs more a pound than nutmeg, as it should, because less mace is produced. It is one of the most delicately flavored spices and is used in making pickles, ketchup, and sauces. Its flavor is quite similar to nutmeg, but mace has a peculiar taste that many people prefer.

Nutmeg trees are found only in the hot moist valleys of the tropics and today are grown mostly in the West Indies, especially Jamaica. Fruits are produced all year long. Since the trees require a hot moist climate and thrive best when near the sea, islands are very favorable places for their growth. A native superstition maintains that nutmeg trees will grow only where the sound of the pounding surf is heard not far away.

Nutmeg trees come into full bearing when they are about twenty years old, and they continue to bear fruit for thirty to forty years. The yield is very high. A large tree produces about one thousand nutmegs every year.

Nutmegs have been used in medicines and as a cooking spice for a long time. Grated nutmeg is sprinkled on custards, puddings, applesauce, and other sweet dishes, and on various beverages as well.

Although Connecticut is known as the Nutmeg State, it is not because nutmegs were grown there. Imitation nutmegs of wood are said to have been made in Connecticut.

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Fourth of a Series on

SPICES

CLOVES

by

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Raymond Foundation



Museum Stories, Number 273

October 23, 1954

Cloves

There is an old saying that cloves will grow only where they can "see the sea." This aromatic spice is obtained from a small evergreen tree of the myrtle family. The clove itself is the unopened flower-bud, which is nail-like in shape. The name "clove" comes from the Spanish word "clavo," which means "nail." Leaves, buds, and flowers all give off a sweet, overpowering aroma that can be smelled for a great distance.

Cloves, over which many battles have been fought, were easily obtained and easily prepared for market. It was the warring natives, the spice pirates, the enemy countries, the hurricanes, and the terrible heat that made cloves so expensive in Europe in early times.

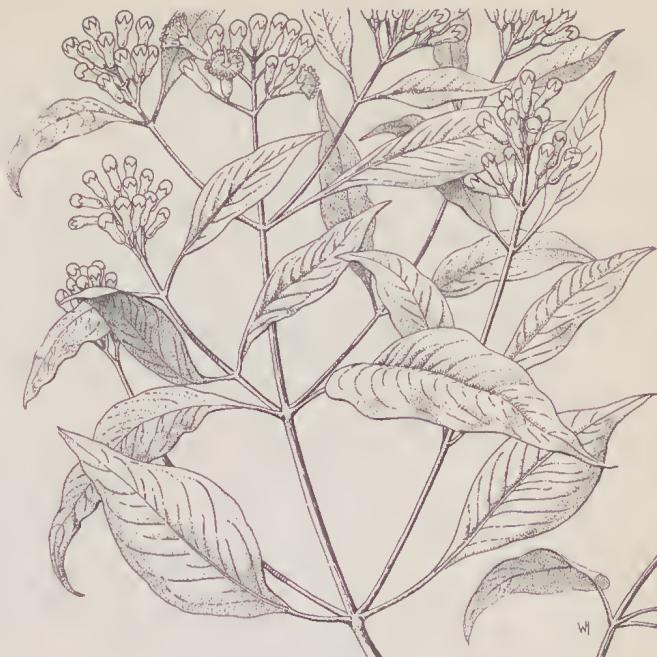
Cloves are one of the most important and useful of the spices. The earliest records of this spice are found in Chinese books dating from 266 B.C. to 220 B.C., wherein it is told that officers of the court were required to hold cloves in their mouths when they addressed their emperor. Cloves were well known in Rome. From the eighth century on, they were regularly imported into Europe.

The origin of cloves was unknown to Europeans until the Portuguese discovered the Moluccas or Spice Islands in the sixteenth century. Today cloves are grown in many tropical countries in both the New and the Old Worlds.

In the wild state the clove tree produces crimson blossoms, but when cultivated it is never allowed to reach the flowering stage because the unopened flower-bud is the spice. The flower-bud is greenish or reddish when fresh and becomes brown and brittle when dried. The clove crop is an uncertain one and is hard to grow. The tree does not produce much until it is at least twenty years old. A single tree may produce up to seventy-five pounds of dry cloves. The flower-buds, as they reddens, are picked by hand. Then they are dried in the sunlight.

Cloves are very fragrant and fine flavored and have a "warming" effect. They have almost endless uses, besides decorating hams. They are used for flavoring pickles,

CLOVE
BRANCH



curries, ketchup, and sauces. They are also used in medicines and for perfuming stale air in rooms and the breath. Cloves have stimulating properties and are an ingredient of betel-nut chew. Clove cigarettes are smoked in Java. Oftentimes cloves are used as a local anesthetic for tooth-ache because they give temporary relief from pain. They are found in many toothpastes and mouthwashes.

Cloves are another spice whose production the Dutch confined to a single island in the Moluccas where they could guard the trees closely. Cloves now are grown chiefly in Zanzibar and Madagascar although some are produced in the Malay area and Africa. The yield from Zanzibar and Madagascar amounts to as much as ten thousand tons a year.

At one time or another the clove tree has been introduced into nearly all parts of the tropics, but few attempts have been made to grow cloves on a big scale. The demand for cloves is limited, and so not too large an area of cultivation is required to stock the world's markets.

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Fifth of a Series on

SPICES

GINGER

by

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Raymond Foundation



Museum Stories, Number 274

October 30, 1954

Ginger

Long before Europeans were acquainted with the wonders of spices, the East knew and honored ginger—the same ginger that we know today in gingerbread and gingersnaps. The Chinese and Hindus, since ancient times, have used ginger as a flavoring, as a candy, and as a medicine.

Ginger, the most important spice obtained from roots, has a long and interesting history. The exact original home of the ginger plant is unknown because no one has ever found the plant in the wild state. But undoubtedly it is native to southeastern Asia, where ginger has been used in China and India for many years.

The Greeks and Romans obtained ginger from Arab traders of the East, who probably brought it from India. It was the first oriental spice brought to Europe, where it was popular during the Middle Ages. Ginger seems to have been well known in England before the Norman Conquest because it is often mentioned in Anglo-Saxon books of the eleventh century. Today ginger is grown over a wider area than most

spices, probably because it is easy to transport. Ginger was one of the first spices from Asia to be grown in the New World. It is cultivated mostly in small home-gardens. It needs a rich, moist soil and at least some shade to grow well. The roots are dug up after the top parts of the plant wither, which takes place usually in January or in February.



Ginger is prepared in two different ways. *Preserved* or *green ginger* is a product of southern China. While the roots are still young, green, tender, and full of juice, they are dug up, buried in another place for a month, and then dried in the sunshine for a day. After this, the roots are cleaned and scalded. Then they are put into cold water, peeled, and scraped. Finally they are placed in a jar and boiled in several sugar solutions of increasing strength. Sometimes preserved ginger is prepared by dusting the drying roots with powdered sugar. The Chinese product excels all other preserved ginger.

Dried or cured ginger is a product of other ginger-producing countries. The roots are cleaned, carefully peeled, and dried in the sun until the whole mass is completely cured. Then the roots are divided into parcels of about one hundred pounds each and put into bags for market.

Ginger is used in cooking, and it is very popular for flavoring beverages, such as ginger ale and ginger beer. Ginger is often used in warm countries because it relaxes the blood vessels in the skin, causing a feeling of warmth. Perspiration is thus increased, with an accompanying drop in body temperature. The next time, then, that you have a glass of ginger ale and you feel a little cooler, you'll know that it's not just your imagination.

The ginger plant can stand a great range of climate. It can be grown at sea level or in high mountains, providing the rainfall is heavy enough or that proper irrigation is used. Ginger planting takes place in March and April when the rainy season starts. The roots sometimes grow to great size. A single root will often weigh one pound. The ginger root is easily shipped in the living state, and this, no doubt, is the reason that the ginger plant spread so rapidly throughout the tropics. It is grown from cuttings of the rootstalk and not from seeds.

The ginger plant was introduced into the West Indies very soon after Columbus discovered the New World. Ginger was exported from Santo Domingo as early as 1585 and from Barbados in 1694. Jamaica has supplied ginger to the spice trade continuously since very early times.

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Sixth of a Series on

SPICES

CINNAMON

by

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Museum Stories, Number 275

November 6, 1954

Cinnamon

Cinnamon has been used by man since Biblical times and is often mentioned in both the Old and the New Testaments. The Chinese used cinnamon as early as 2700 B.C. It comes from the bark of the cinnamon tree, a small shrubby tree with thick shiny leaves and small flowers that is native to Ceylon and India.

Cinnamon and cassia, which closely resembles cinnamon both in appearance and taste, were often mistaken for each other in early writings. Cassia was used long before cinnamon, but when cinnamon was discovered, cassia lost some of its popularity.

In 1505 the Portuguese sailed around the southern tip of Africa. It was on this voyage that they discovered Ceylon and its cinnamon. Before this time, cinnamon was brought to Europe over the old caravan routes across the eastern Mediterranean region. In 1536 the Portuguese occupied Ceylon for the sake of the cinnamon trade. About two hundred years later the Dutch took Ceylon away from the Portuguese and with it the production of cinnamon.

Under Dutch rule, Ceylonese princes were forced to give cinnamon bark as tribute. To make sure that cinnamon would always be available, cinnamon-cutters were placed in an especially low social class from which there was absolutely no escape. Generation after generation of natives was born into the cinnamon-cutting group to a life of severe punishment and never-ending labor under the blistering tropical sun. These were the natives who brought cultivation of Ceylon's cinnamon to its peak.

Cinnamon was very difficult to cultivate and transport. The bark of the upper shoots was peeled off in thin sheets like paper and fitted together in long sticks or quills containing hundreds of layers. In this way cinnamon was shipped to Europe. Then, in European warehouses, it was ground between two stones and sifted through silk.

Cinnamon bark is collected just after the rainy seasons begin (the two rainy seasons occur from May to August and from November to January). At this time the sap begins to

circulate abundantly between the wood and the bark and, therefore, allows easy peeling. The young trees are cut back so that extra shoots will develop from the roots. The shoots, which are long and slender and furnish the commercial product, are cut twice a year. The bark of year-old shoots has very little flavor, and the best bark comes from shoots that are two years old. The selected twigs are usually trimmed before being taken to the peeling shed where the bark is removed with special knives.

Cinnamon is grown in Ceylon, Burma, southern India, and parts of Malaya and, to some extent, in South America and the West Indies. No longer are all the plantations owned and managed by Europeans, nor are the Ceylonese princes forced to pay tribute in cinnamon bark.

Cinnamon-growing, however, seems to have fallen off in recent years, and southern Ceylon supplies most of the cinnamon that is needed. Every year several thousand tons of cinnamon quills are shipped from Ceylon to other countries, for cinnamon is one of the most popular spices. It is used principally in the bakery trade and as a flavoring in home cooking. It is also used in candy, gum, dentifrices, incense, perfumes, and some medicines. Today three-fourths of all the cinnamon used is cassia mixed with the true cinnamon.

Those of us who like cinnamon bread and cinnamon toast will agree, surely, that cinnamon ranks with cloves and pepper as one of the most important as well as one of the most useful spices.



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Seventh of a Series on

SPICES

ALLSPICE

by

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Museum Stories, Number 276

November 13, 1954

Allspice

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could get an ice cream that would taste like chocolate, strawberry, and vanilla all at the same time? Unfortunately there is no such ice cream, but there is a spice that tastes like cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg all mixed up! It should be easy for you to understand then why it is called allspice. Other names for allspice are pimento and Jamaica pepper. The name "pimento," which comes from the Spanish word for pepper, was given to allspice by the early explorers of the New World because its berries resemble peppercorns.

Allspice is the dried unripe berry of a tree closely related to the clove tree. Both allspice and cloves are members of the myrtle family. The allspice tree is an evergreen that stands twenty to thirty feet high and has large leathery leaves, clusters of numerous white flowers, and purple fruits. It is the only common spice found growing wild in the New World, where it is native to the West Indies. It is found in greatest numbers in Jamaica, which has an almost complete monopoly of the allspice industry and exports about five million pounds of allspice a year. Smaller amounts are produced by Mexico and Guatemala.

Allspice is seldom cultivated, however, and it is found at its best growing six thousand feet above the sea close to the coastline. Because the seeds are scattered by birds, allspice trees are found in many parts of Jamaica, sometimes in small groups of about thirty trees and sometimes in great forests. Allspice, which is the most common tree on the island, is seldom found growing singly.



The ripe berries lose most of their spicy flavor, and so allspice is gathered when the berries are full-sized but still green. In August, when the berries are full-grown but not yet ripe, they are picked. The harvesting is done by hand. The twigs and stems that bear the fruit are broken off and these are placed on mats on a raised wooden terrace to dry in the sunshine from seven to twelve days. Great care must be taken to make sure that the berries are fully exposed to the sun because moisture would destroy their quality. For this reason planters sometimes dry the berries in kilns or ovens. As the berries dry, they become wrinkled and reddish brown and their aroma gets stronger and more noticeable.

The picker who removes the berries from the trees keeps three people, who are usually women and children, busy gathering them up. The gatherers carefully separate, as far as possible, all the ripe berries from the green ones. Otherwise the crop would be considered poor.

Allspice trees grow slowly. They begin to bear fruit when they are about seven years old and continue to bear for about twelve years. Each tree will produce an average crop of twenty-five to one hundred pounds of the spice.

Allspice is very popular for flavoring sauces, pickles, sausages, and soups. It is often used to disguise the bad taste of medicines and sometimes it is used in tanning certain kinds of leather. An oil from allspice is used in making perfumes. Young allspice trees are highly valued for walking canes and umbrella sticks. At one time these canes were exported from Jamaica in such large numbers that the allspice industry was seriously threatened.



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Eighth of a Series on

SPICES

MUSTARD

by

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Raymond Foundation



Museum Stories, Number 277

November 20, 1954

Mustard

What would a hamburger or "hot dog" be without mustard! The use of mustard is not new. It goes back through many centuries. The mustard plant is mentioned in the Bible and also in early Greek and Roman writings.

There are two kinds of mustard plants, black mustard and white mustard. They are very much alike, but the black is more common than the white. Commercial mustard is made from the ripe seeds. The stronger, more pungent black mustard is preferred in Europe, while white mustard is popular in England. The familiar mustard of our "hot-dog" stands is made from equal amounts of black and white mustard, salt, vinegar, and certain other aromatics.

The black-mustard plant, which is native to Eurasia, is grown in almost all countries. It is found throughout most of Europe, except the northern part, and in northern Africa, Asia Minor, the West Indies, southern Siberia, China, and the United States.

In Europe and Asia black mustard is often cultivated for its young leaves, which are used as a flavoring in salads. It is especially cultivated in England, Germany, Holland, and Italy. The best mustard comes from the Trieste area in Italy. In our own country black mustard is found just about everywhere—in dooryards, along ditches and roadsides, and in neglected gardens and waste places. It is considered a weed in many places, but in California, Kentucky, and Montana it is planted as a crop.

The black-mustard plant may grow as high as twelve feet, but usually it is only two and one-half to four feet high. Its seeds, which are dark brown on the outside and yellow inside, are borne within a fruit that is less than one inch long. Black mustard is very aromatic and contains an oil that is very powerful and dangerous to handle because it blisters the skin easily and is irritating to the eyes and the membranes of the nose.

Mustard has been used in several curious ways. In by-gone times it was used to stop toothaches, to deaden the pain of having one's hair pulled, and to take away the

black-and-blue marks of bruises. And in Shakespeare's time many people felt that their traditional meal of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday was not complete if the pancakes had no mustard on them. Today some people even like to put mustard on their apple pie!

Ground mustard as we know it was first prepared in Durham, England, in 1720 by a lady named Mrs. Clements. She used the seeds of the wild mustard that grew plentifully in that area. To this day the manufacture of commercial mustard is an important industry in that town. For ground mustard, the outer husk is removed from the seeds. After the seeds are passed between rollers and crushed, they are reduced to an even finer powder in a mortar. In France the husks are not removed, and so French mustard is darker and more pungent because the husks contain the "biting" qualities of the plant in large quantities. In the United States, mustard that is made by grinding to a smooth paste the entire seeds of black and white mustard with vinegar and other ingredients forms the bulk of the commercial product, consumption of which is surprisingly large.

Mustard is very popular for flavoring pickles, sardines, and salad dressings. It is used not only as a food flavoring but also in medicines because of its stimulating properties. Most people are familiar with the use of mustard plasters and mustard foot-baths. Mustard aids digestion and, when mixed with warm water, mustard is an efficient remedy in case of poisoning.



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Ninth of a Series on

SPICES

VANILLA

by

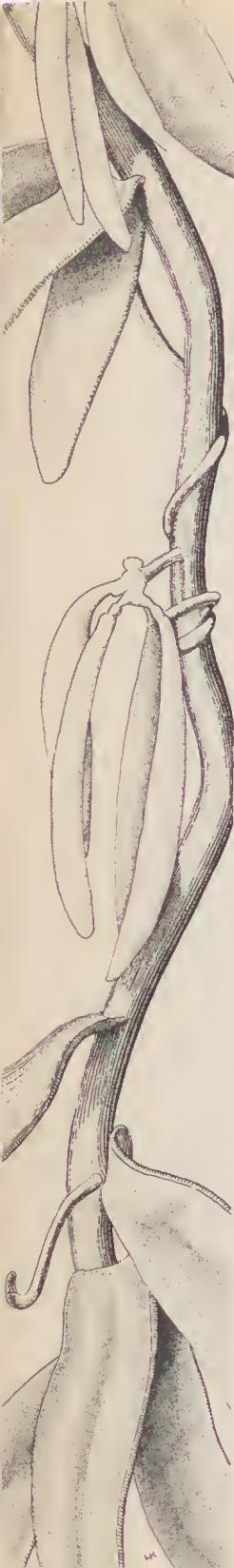
MARIE SVOBODA

Raymond Foundation



Museum Stories, Number 278

November 27, 1954



Vanilla

A climbing orchid, native to the hot moist forests of tropical America, is the chief source of vanilla. This favorite flavoring is obtained from the fully grown but unripe cured fruits. The plant is a vine with large leathery leaves and greenish-yellow flowers. The fruits are long, thin, yellow, pod-like capsules, six to ten inches long. They are known as vanilla beans.

Vanilla is a strictly tropical plant and requires a hot climate with much rain. In cultivation it is grown from cuttings, just like sugar cane, and is trained to climb over supports such as posts or living trees.

The flavor and aroma are not present in the vanilla beans until they have been cured. The beans are picked at just the right time before they are ripe and put through a "sweating" process. They are exposed to the sun during the morning and protected by blankets during the afternoon. At night they are placed in air-tight boxes. After this curing process has been completed, the pods become tough and fragrant and turn dark brown.

Although vanilla was originally a Mexican plant, ninety per cent of the world's crop of vanilla comes from Madagascar. Almost fifty per cent of the total crop of vanilla is used in the United States.

Vanilla flavoring was used by the Indians long before Columbus discovered the New World. The vanilla plant was found in Mexico by the Spaniards who were in search of gold. They saw that the Mexican natives were not digging for gold in the steaming-hot tropical jungles but, to the astonishment of the Spaniards, were tending vines that bore fragrant

flowers. The Spaniards also saw the dark-skinned men and women picking long beans from the vines and fermenting the beans to develop the strange but delicious vanilla flavoring. The Aztecs used vanilla to flavor chocolate.

It is said that Montezuma, Emperor of the Aztecs, drank no other beverage than "chocolatl," which was flavored with vanilla and other spices. It was beaten to a froth just before it was drunk. Montezuma liked it so well that he drank fifty pitchers of it every day. He drank from a golden cup and stirred his drink with a spoon made of gold or tortoise shell. And his household drank two thousand pitchers of chocolate every day!

The Spaniards saw, also, hundreds of bees and hummingbirds flashing among the leaves and flowers of the vanilla vines. But none of the Spaniards knew that the bees and hummingbirds not only were getting food for themselves but also were pollinating the vanilla flowers. In the tropical jungles, where the vanilla vines grow wild, the bees and the hummingbirds still pollinate the vanilla flowers, but now on the vanilla plantations the fragrant blossoms are pollinated by natives who transfer the pollen from flower to flower with pointed sticks.

Vanilla has a delicious flavor that will not let its popularity die out. Vanilla is used to flavor chocolate, ice cream, candy, pudding, cake, and beverages. It is also used to flavor tobacco and perfumes. Occasionally the vanilla bean itself is used for flavoring, but an extract of vanilla that is made by treating the crushed beans with alcohol is used more often.

A cheap substitute for vanilla is obtained from the tonka beans of Trinidad and South America. Several other plants have been used unsuccessfully for the true vanilla flavoring. The artificial flavoring known as vanillin is made from pine wood and oil of cloves. Although artificial vanilla is much cheaper than real vanilla and can be put on the market with less cost, the cultivation of the vanilla plant is by no means a thing of the past. You can truly say that your vanilla ice cream, your chocolate candy-bar, and your birthday cake are "orchid" flavored.

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